

VI. Action Plan

Unit Goal Statement

The Fresno-Kings Unit goal is to identify and address prefire issues in the CDF DPA, within the boundaries of the Fresno County Fire Protection District and within the boundaries of Fig Garden Fire Protection District, by fully integrating Prefire, Prevention and Vegetation Management.

Unit Action Plan

The Fresno-Kings Unit will apply a three pronged integrated approach to prefire management in the Unit. This approach involves integrating Prefire Engineering, Fire Prevention, and Vegetation Management. Each of these programs has tools that can be utilized to help address prefire issues. By integrating these programs the best tools for the job can be utilized while eliminating duplication of efforts and assigning the limited resources to the highest priority projects. All proposed projects from any of the three programs will be entered into the CDF Prefire Workload Analysis (PWA) Program in order to predict and track costs associated with the project. All proposed projects will also be reviewed by all three (3) programs to determine which resources and tools can be used from the programs to make a complete project.

The Unit Prefire Engineer will collect and analyze data, then with stakeholder input, identify areas of the lowest level of service, highest values of assets at risk in high fuel hazard rankings. The Prefire Engineer will plan and develop projects to address the issues so that they can be considered during the overall Unit priority rankings.

The Unit Fire Prevention Battalion Chief will collect and analyze fire cause data to determine trends and areas of concern. The Unit Fire Prevention Battalion Chief will also provide public information, education, engineering and enforcement resources as needed for various prefire projects. Opportunities to apply Public Resource Code 4290 and 4291 in prefire projects will be identified by the Unit Fire Prevention Battalion Chief. The Unit Fire Prevention Battalion Chief will provide priority areas and plan and develop projects to be considered in the overall Unit priority rankings.

The Unit VMP Coordinator will look at opportunities for vegetation management via prescribed fire, mechanical/hand treatment and forest practice rule application. The Unit VMP Coordinator will also provide environmental review and documentation for prefire projects as well as assist the Unit Prefire Engineer in designing prefire projects. The Unit VMP Coordinator will also be responsible for providing a prioritization of VMP projects to be considered during the overall Unit priority rankings.

The Unit Prefire Engineer will be responsible for collecting the prioritized projects and areas from Fire Prevention, VMP and Prefire Engineering. The Unit Prefire Engineer

will then lead a Unit level review of the submitted priorities and then develop a prioritized list of prefire projects that the Unit administration will consider implementing. The factors that will be considered during the review will be whether or not an individual project or area of concern is being identified as a priority in more than one program and the availability of funding and resources. Since funding of some of the projects will depend on grants, their prioritization will change based on funding availability.

This three-prong approach will also address prefire issues within the boundaries of the Fresno County Fire Protection District and Fig Garden Fire Protection District. The Fresno County Fire Protection District and Fig Garden Fire Protection District has contracted with the California Department of Forestry to provide personnel and management services for the District. Even though the funding sources for the potential prefire projects are different, the resource base is the same and needs to be coordinated so that the highest priority projects receive the limited resources available.

Battalion Fire Management Plans

Battalion level Fire Management Plans are included in Appendix D

Interagency Planning

The Unit Prefire Engineer, VMP Coordinator and appropriate field Battalion Chiefs have been meeting with fuels management personnel of the Sierra National Forest to cooperatively identify and plan for potential prefire projects in the wildland urban interface. During these interagency meetings the participants exchange information about current projects such as GIS data and types of treatments. This information is then used to identify areas that current or proposed projects can be modified to improve the overall protection to the communities at risk in the wildland urban interface.

These meetings have lead to the identification of several areas that cooperative projects could be designed and initiated by CDF and Sierra National Forest.

In the past, meetings have been scheduled with personnel from the Sequoia National Forest, but they have been cancelled for various reasons. Additional effort has been made to establish the same type of working and planning relationship with personnel from the Sequoia National Forest. The formation of the Oak to Timberline Fire Safe Council will help develop the necessary contacts with Sequoia National Forest.

Priority Areas

Prefire Priority Areas

The Fire Plan Assessment utilizes Geographic Information System (GIS) data to help determine priority areas for prefire projects. Since the Unit is in the process of the Fire Plan Assessment, only a partial analysis of GIS data has been used to help determine priority areas. For the most part the priority areas have been determined by experience, knowledge and fire history records. The following priority areas were determined through input from Unit personnel and stakeholders. The priorities were determined by reviewing the fire history, the assets at risk, the fuel ranking, potential for a large damaging wildfire and the potential for Prefire projects to address the issues.

- Meadow Lakes Area

The Meadow Lakes area is located along the Auberry Road corridor between the communities of Auberry and Shaver Lake. The area is bound by National Forest land to the north, Highway 168 to the south and east, and the community of Auberry to the west. The area's elevation ranges from approximately 2,000 feet to approximately 4,800 feet. The vegetation ranges from oak woodland and mixed chaparral to mixed conifer. This area includes several residential developments located along Auberry Road. The residential developments consist of approximately 150 dwellings of a mix of seasonal and year-round use. The developments are located along or close to the ridge top of Bald Mountain. This area has a significant fire history and has been threatened by wildfire several times within the last decade. Meadow Lakes has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. This area is identified as a priority area due to its high fuel hazard ranking, high assets at risk and extensive fire history. This area includes the Beal Fuel Break VMP project and Linson Lane VMP project that were conducted in cooperation with the Sierra National Forest. This area has potential for additional cooperative projects with the Sierra National Forest.

- Pineridge Area

The Pineridge area is located just off Highway 168 between the communities of Shaver Lake and Tollhouse. The area is bound by National Forest lands to the east, Highway 168 to the west, Pineridge Subdivision to the north, and Sycamore Creek to the south. The area's elevation ranges from approximately 2,000 feet to approximately 5,600 feet. The vegetation ranges from mixed tall chaparral to mixed conifer. This area includes Cressman Roads and Peterson Mill Road. The area contains four residential developments. The first is the Pineridge subdivision on Cressman Road. This

subdivision consists of approximately 75 residences on 113 parcels. The dwellings are a mix of seasonal and year-round use. The second residential development is along Peterson Mill Road below the Pineridge subdivision. It also contains a mix of approximately 75 seasonal and year-round use dwellings. Both developments are located mid-slope on a south facing aspect. The third subdivision is Shaver Springs. The fourth development is in the Linson Lane area. The Pineridge area is in close proximity to the community of Meadow Lakes, which has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. This area is identified as a priority area due to its high to very high fuel hazard ranking, high assets at risk and stakeholder participation. This area has potential for cooperative projects conducted by both Fresno-Kings Unit and Sierra National Forest.

- Powerhouse Road Area

The Powerhouse Road area is located north of the community of Auberry. The area consists of the Powerhouse road corridor from the San Joaquin River to Auberry. The elevation varies from approximately 700 feet to approximately 2700 feet. The vegetation consists of a mix of tall chaparral and oak woodland. The area is a mix of Federal and private ownerships. This area is moderately developed and has an extensive fire history. Many fires originating from this area spread rapidly and threaten some of the other priority areas such as Meadow Lakes and Shaver Lake Basin. Auberry, which is located in the Powerhouse Road area, has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. This area is identified as a priority area due to its high fuel hazard ranking, high assets at risk and extensive fire history.

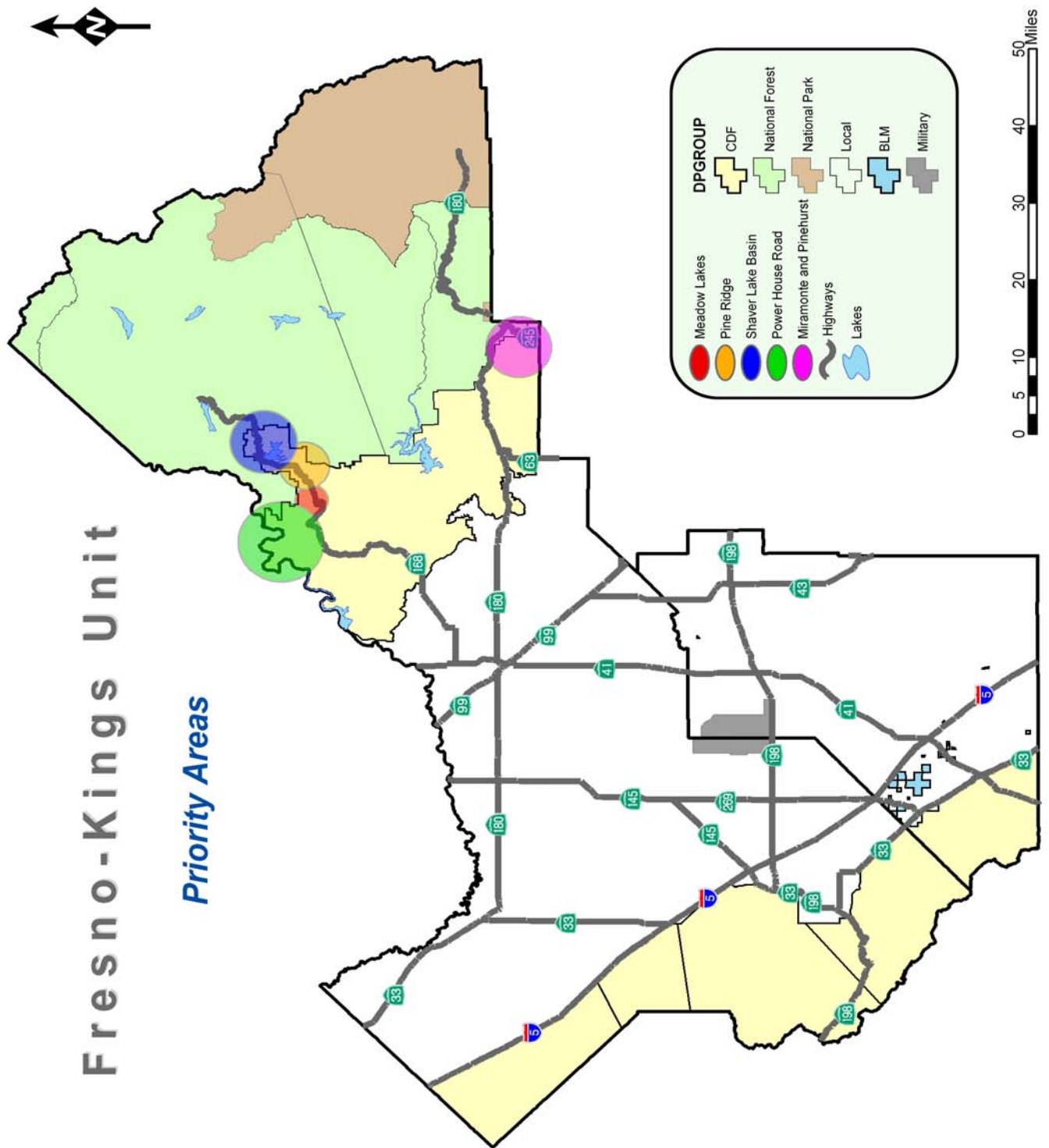
- Shaver Lake Basin Area

The Shaver Lake Basin Area is located along the Highway 168 corridor between the areas of Huntington Lake and Pine Ridge. The area is adjacent to National Forest land and consists of the community of Shaver Lake and the surrounding numerous residential subdivisions. A large percentage of the land is owned and managed by the Southern California Edison Company (SCE). SCE manages their land for timber, water and recreation. One of the management tools that they use extensively is prescribed fire. Hence, the designation of much of the SCE land as fire safe areas for the community of Shaver Lake. The area's elevation ranges from approximately 5,300 feet to approximately 6,600 feet. The vegetation is predominately mixed conifer. This area is experiencing rapid development of subdivisions. A majority of the dwellings are seasonally used and of high value. The area experiences very high recreational use year-round. This area is threatened by wildfires originating from lower elevations such as Pineridge, Jose Basin and Blue Canyon. Shaver Lake has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. This area has potential for cooperative projects between CDF, Sierra National Forest and SCE. This area is identified as a priority area due to its very high fuel hazard ranking and very high assets at risk.

- Miramonte, Pinehurst and Dunlap Area

The Miramonte and Pinehurst area is located in the southeast portion of the Unit. The area includes the communities of Pinehurst and Miramonte. The area is bound by National Forest lands to the east, Sans Baker Road to the west, Tulare Unit to the south, and State Highway 180 to the north. The area's elevation ranges from approximately 1,900 feet to approximately 3,800 feet. The vegetation consists of mixed tall chaparral and mixed conifer. The area is moderately developed. This area has potential for cooperative projects between CDF and Sequoia National Forest. Pinehurst has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. This area is identified as a priority area due to its high fuel hazard ranking and high assets at risk.

Map 6 – Priority Areas



Fire Prevention Priority Areas

Target Area # 1
(Priority 1)

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Target area number one is in Battalion's 11, 12, and 13, which involves the lower elevations of these Battalions. The influencing factors involved are light flashy fuels, housing density, and fire history. Over the last several years fire ignitions have increased due to stakeholders mowing dry weeds and grass when temperatures were high with low relative humidity, in attempt to comply with PRC 4291. Although there were a higher number of ignitions, all were contained within the first burning period. Public education will be the emphasis of efforts to mitigate the ignitions.

OBJECTIVES

1. Solicit stakeholder and community involvement in wildfire mitigation through public education and awareness projects.
2. Encourage fuel reduction to start prior to the hot summer season.
3. Escalate the LE-38 inspection program.

PRESCRIPTIONS

1. Educate stakeholders within their communities through fire safe councils and other social groups.
2. Utilize public education materials provided by the Department through the year.
3. Begin LE-38 inspections prior to the opening of fire season.

Target Area # 2
(Priority 2)

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Target area number two is in LRA Battalion's 17 and 18. Various locations through out these Battalions are experiencing a high number of vehicle fires caused by arson. These

vehicles are stolen, striped and taken to remote areas within this target area and set on fire. These historical ignitions are difficult to manage therefore; the emphasis of efforts must involve other law enforcement agencies.

OBJECTIVES

1. Decrease number of ignitions.
2. Establish contacts with other law enforcement agencies.
3. First in engine companies increase preliminary fire investigation.

PRESCRIPTIONS

1. Post reward posters in communities that the vehicles are being stolen from.
2. Work with allied agencies in developing a multi-agency deterrent plan.
3. Conduct a refresher course on preliminary fire investigation for engine companies. It is the opinion of Fire Prevention investigators, that evidence is being inadvertently damaged during suppression.

Target Area # 3
(Priority #3)

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Target area number three is in Battalion 18 and a small portion of Battalion 17. Intentional ignitions to sheds and out buildings have increased significantly this past year. These building are used by local farmers for the sale of produce and storage.

OBJECTIVES

1. Investigate and arrest the person(s) responsible for igniting these fires.

PRESCRIPTIONS

1. Working with local law enforcement agencies agriculture crime task force, to develop a plan that could be used to investigate these crimes as a joint effort, time and resources will play a vital part in mitigating these ignitions.

Target Area #4

(Priority #4)

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Target number four is the current LE-38 program within the unit.

OBJECTIVES

1. Intensify the LE-38 program with the intent to complete all first inspections within the first two months of fire season.

PRESCRIPTIONS

1. In order to accomplish the objective the unit would need to hire inspectors as soon as the season will allow. Inspectors should form a team in lieu of working as individuals. The team concept would ensure that a battalion is completed before moving on to the next battalion. It has been past practice within the unit to pull the inspectors off of the LE-38 program and use them for engine coverage, when this occurs the inspection program is extremely delayed.

Fire Prevention Priority Areas:

Priority #1 - Continue Public Education and awareness by increasing the use of mass media and public programs on a year round bases.

Priority #2 - Provide and assist field battalions with any needs they may have in implementing education and prevention programs.

Priority #3 – Law Enforcement must be allowed to continue the mission of fire investigation, cost collection, issuance of citations, monitor fires causes, and take appropriate action to reduce or eliminate ignitions.

VMP Priority Areas

Priorities for vegetation management projects are based on several issues including; vegetation type, specific ecosystem needs and treatment opportunities. These priorities may change several times a year in response to new projects opportunities or Prefire management needs.

In general, vegetation management priorities will be based on the vegetation type/fuel type involved. Projects involving grass models have a low priority. Projects within the brush models have a medium to high priority based on specific project location. Brush projects located within and/or adjacent to an urban intermix area will have a higher priority than projects located away from intermix areas. Projects within the timber models have a medium to high priority based on specific project location. Timber projects located within and/or adjacent to an urban intermix area will have a higher priority than projects located away from intermix areas.

Specific ecosystem management projects have a floating priority based on the specific project objectives and the vegetation involved. An example of this would be noxious weed treatment. Certain species have a very specific treatment windows and the project's priority would be dependent on treatment window needs, i.e. prescribed burn Medusahead after the curing of the native grasses but prior to the curing of the Medusahead.

Unexpected opportunities can alter vegetation management priorities. As the majority of VMP projects are located on private lands with the cooperation of private landowners, an unexpected request for a project may alter priorities. If a landowner in an area designated for fuels reduction efforts expresses interest in a project, it may move a project in an area not designated for fuels reduction efforts to a lower priority.

Prefire Management Activities

Existing Prefire Projects/Activities

The following projects have been identified as Unit level Prefire Projects/Activities. These projects will require input or assistance from Fire Prevention, Prefire, Vegetation Management or Miramonte Conservation Camp personnel. Additional Prefire Projects/Activities are being implemented by battalion level personnel without further assistance from Unit staff. *Additional information on these projects can be found within Appendix D -Battalion Level Fire Management Plans.*

Roadside Fire Breaks

The Fresno-Kings Unit utilizes and maintains pre-existing fire breaks in several locations in the Unit that have a continuing ignition problem. These locations are primarily in the grass fuel model. Prior to the grasses curing at the start of the fire season, the Miramonte crews install fire breaks. These fire breaks now have a history of not allowing fires to spread beyond the road right-a-ways. The general location of these Prefire structures is listed below:

Sky Harbour Road – Battalion 11
Highway 168 – Battalion 12
Highway 180 – Battalion 13
Sunnyslope on Trimmer Springs Road – Battalion 13

Fire Road Maintenance

The Fresno-Kings Unit has an on-going maintenance program for the existing fire control roads that have been established in the Unit. Unit HFEOs maintain the erosion control structures and grade these roads during the spring months. Several of these roads will require vegetation removal in the near future to maintain the right-a-way and also allow their use as Prefire structures. The roads currently being maintained are listed below:

Beal – Battalion 12
Black Mtn. – Battalion 12
Baker – Battalion 13
Greeley – Battalion 13
White Deer – Battalion 13
Fish Creek – Battalion 13
Hog Mountain – Battalion 13
Hughes Creek – Battalion 13
Hughes Mountain – Battalion 13
Elwood-Kincade – Battalion 13
Badger-Miramonte – Battalion 13
Miramonte Access Road – Battalion 13
Tar Canyon – Battalion 14
Juniper Ridge – Battalion 14
Mud Run – Battalion 14

Currently the Prefire Division is mapping all the fire roads and prioritizing the maintenance of these roads. While prioritizing the fire roads, information from the Unit HFEOs's will be used to determine an appropriate return interval for road maintenance.

Millerton Lake Fire Safe Cabin/Landscape Display

The Fresno-Kings Unit Prevention Bureau in cooperation with the Department of the Interior-Bureau of Reclamation, the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, California State University Fresno, and a few private companies, have established an educational visitor center at Millerton State Park. At this center there are permanent, living displays of native/drought tolerant vegetation, vegetation utilized by Native Americans, wildflowers, types of irrigation systems, ground covers, and fire safe landscaping. In addition there is a ten by ten-foot structure located within the fire safe

landscaping display to show clearance and safety issues around structures. The Department of Parks and Recreation provides tours through the center for school field trips and other interested groups. The public will have access for self-guided tours of the center after completion. The Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Parks and Recreation, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection will provide maintenance for the center. The following fire prevention education will be available at the center:

- Fire Resistant Plant Guides
- Defensible Space Guidelines
- Hazard Reduction Burning Safety
- Rural House Addressing
- Power Equipment Safety
- Spark Arrestor Guidelines
- Match and Lighter Safety
- Juvenile Firesetter
- Seasonal Fire Prevention Messages

Additional funding, through grants, is still being sought to complete descriptive signs, seasonal educational displays, handout materials, fire prevention education materials for teacher packets and materials for completion of the structure.

Tollhouse Roadside Brushing – Battalion 12

This is a joint project between the Fresno-Kings Unit and the Sierra National Forest. The Sierra National Forest brushes Tollhouse road from Mountain Rest Forest Fire Station down to 33702 Tollhouse Road. Miramonte crews brush Tollhouse Road from 33702 Tollhouse Road down to Linson Lane. The project involves clearing brush within 100' of Tollhouse Road then stacking and burning it. CDF has a Burn Boss from the Mountain Rest Station in attendance when burning is to occur. This project is located in the Unit's Pine Ridge priority area.

Greeley Fire Road Brushing – Battalion 13

This project involves the brushing of the Greeley Fire Control Road as a routine maintenance item. At the time the project was initiated, vegetation would rub both sides of an engine as it traveled on parts of the road. Greeley Fire Control Road runs north from the community of Miramonte. This fire control road is located within the Miramonte and Pinehurst Priority Area. There have been two (2) significant fires in the area in the last two (2) years (Millwood Fire 2000 and Highway Fire 2001). The project encompasses approximately nine (9) acres over 2.4 miles of fire road. This project was started in the spring of 2001 with the objective of utilizing the Unit's new chipper rather than piling and burning the cut material. The use of alternatives to burning will become the norm within the Fresno-Kings Unit due to air quality issues within the San Joaquin

Valley Unified APCD. At this time, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile has been completed due to logistical problems of utilizing the Unit's chipper. The primary issue has been difficulty in obtaining personnel to move, operate and supervise the chippers use.

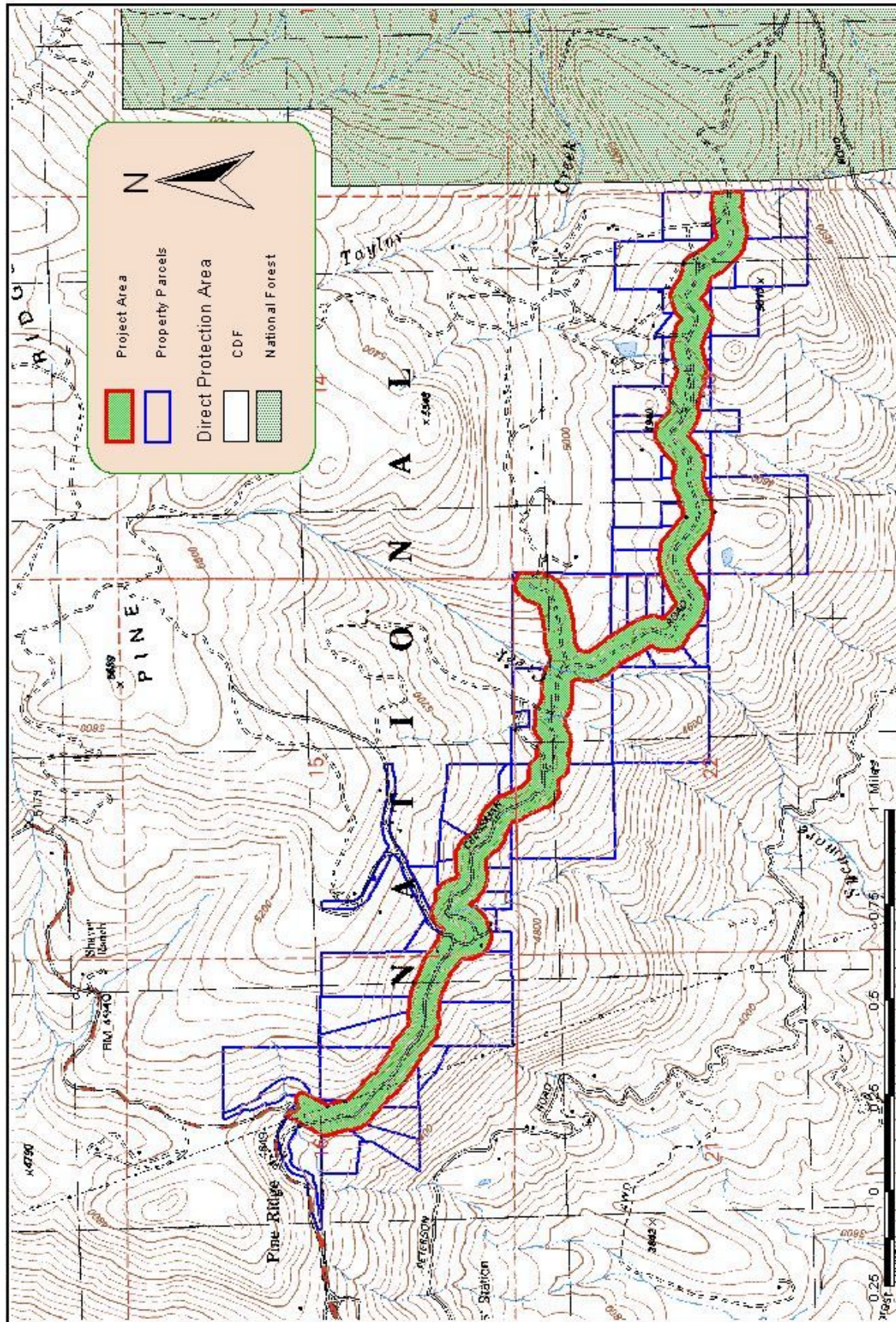
Cressman Road Defensible Fuels Profile Zone – Battalion 12

This project consists of the initial construction of a Defensible Fuels Profile Zone (DFPZ) within 200 feet of either side of Cressman Road from Highway 168 to the Sierra National Forest Boundary, in the Pine Ridge area of Fresno County. The project is located within the Pine Ridge Priority Area for the Unit. This project was developed with input from the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council. The project is designed to improve firefighter and resident safety traveling along a mid-slope, south facing aspect, single lane road that accesses approximately 75 residences on 113 parcels. At project completion, the vertical and horizontal continuity of ground fuels should be broken along approximately 3.4 miles of roadway encompassing 165 acres. Due to the project area being within a conifer vegetation type, it is outside of the VMP process. The CEQA review was completed and approved in March of 2000. Fieldwork on the project began with \$3,000 in Fiscal Year 99/00 augmented fuel reduction funding from the State Legislature. It was also funded with a 2001 USDA Wildland Urban Interface grant of \$67,786. This grant expired on June 30, 2003. The project also received a 2002 USDA Wildland Urban Interface grant in the amount of \$60,930. This grant expired June 30, 2004. Approximately 100+ acres were completed. Work on this project was delayed several months due to limitations on the use of funds to reimbursement Miramonte Conservation Camp for their work on the project. Interpretations and decisions made at the Sacramento level limited the Unit's ability to reimburse crews for work done on grant funded CDF projects. Therefore, approximately \$30,000 of the \$60,930 received from the 2002 USDA Wildland Urban Interface grant was returned to Sacramento. This project is now considered complete by the Unit. The Unit Prefire Coordinator is now working with landowners to keep the project maintained.

To complement this project a focused PRC 4291 inspection program will be utilized within the Pine Ridge subdivision. This focused inspection program will emphasize personal contact, education and enforcement by local station personnel.

In July of 2004 the Cressman Road Defensible Fuels Profile Zone was tested by fire during the Peterson fire. Details of the incident and the fires interaction with the project are described in the Interaction Report located in Appendix F – Success Stories.

Map 6 – Cressman DFPZ Project



Cressman Road Defensible Fuel Profile Zone (DFPZ)

Dogwood Subdivision Fuels Reduction – Battalion 12

Interagency meetings with the Sierra National Forest have identified the Dogwood Subdivision area as a potential project area. The Dogwood Subdivision is located north of Highway 168 between the Pine Ridge area and the Shaver Lake basin, in northeastern Fresno County. This area is in close proximity to the communities of Shaver Lake and Meadow Lakes. Both Shaver Lake and Meadow Lakes have been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as communities at risk from wildfire. Vegetation management projects have been discussed ranging from fuel break construction to general fuels reduction.

The Dogwood Subdivision is located within the Shaver Lake Basin Priority Area. The Subdivision is located mid-slope above the Jose Basin area. There are only two (2) access points into and out of the subdivision. The Jose Basin area is considered a high hazard area due to its high recreation use, fuel complexes and rapid elevation change from 1,500 feet to 6,000 feet. The Sierra National Forest is nearing completion of their environmental review that will allow them to initiate fuels reduction projects within Jose Basin. Larger private landowners in the area have also recently expressed interest in fuels reduction options.

There is an additional opportunity to utilize a focused PRC 4291 inspection program in conjunction with any vegetation management programs developed for this area. This type of focused inspection program would emphasize personal contact, education and enforcement by local station personnel. It is believed that this combination of activities can further heighten the knowledge of area residents not only to fuels reduction, but also to general wildfire safety.

During the spring of 2004, Unit personnel and the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council met with Dogwood subdivision representatives and provided them with an assessment of the wildfire danger in their subdivision. The Dogwood subdivision property owners are becoming aware and concerned with the wildfire danger in their subdivision. All of the parties involved have become engaged in active prefire planning for this project.

Recently a portion of the Dogwood subdivision in cooperation with the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council and the Fresno-Kings Unit applied for and received Proposition 40 Community grant funding to complete fuel load reduction work below the Dogwood subdivision. Currently the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council has a signed agreement with CDF and is working with CDF to complete the Categorical Exemption so work can begin within the next several months.

Peterson Mill Road Fuel Break– Battalion 12

During the Spring and early summer of 2005 the Fresno-Kings Unit conducted a small demonstration project along Peterson Mill Road below Shaver Lake. The Purpose of the

project was to demonstrate to the local landowners what could be done along Peterson Road to help with the local fire issue. The demonstration project could then be used by the landowners to help them visualize a much larger project for the entire road length. The Peterson Mill Road landowners have now successfully obtained a Proposition 40, CDF Community Protection Grant, to treat a section of the road. The project can now be used to help orient the project contractors to what the desired outcome should look like. The catalyst of the Peterson Mill Road Project was the Peterson Fire in July of 2004. *See the Peterson Fire Interaction Report in Appendix F – Success Stories*

RedZone Pilot Project

During the fall of 2004 the Fresno-Kings Unit conducted a pilot project to test the feasibility of utilizing Redzone Software during LE-38 inspections. The Dogwood subdivision in Shaver Lake was selected as the test site. Redzone Software loaned several small handheld computers and provided technical support to the project. The Unit in cooperation with Redzone Software developed a custom questionnaire for the project. Several two person teams were formed and assigned to canvas the subdivision. 90% of the subdivision was covered the first day. One additional day by a single team completed the data collection for the subdivision. At this time the data has been collected but not formally analyzed or discussed in a report. The initial observations indicated that the Redzone Software was easily adapted to the LE-38 inspection process and provided very useful data for Prefire planning as well as for CAD in the Emergency Command Center. As time allows a final report will be created to demonstrate some of the capabilities of the Redzone Software.

Proposed Prefire Projects/Activities

Initiation of Additional Fire Safe Council – Battalions 14

It is felt that a traditional Council may not work in the western portion of the Unit. Within this area, there are not the community centers that exist in the eastern portion of the Unit. This area primarily contains large ranches and lands managed by BLM. This portion of the Unit contains several existing watershed and resource conservation groups such as Stewards of the Arroyo Pasajero Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) group, Panoche/Silver Creek CRMP and the Westside Resource Conservation District. It is felt that these groups already have the participation of most major landowners in this portion of the Unit. With an increased CDF participation in these existing stakeholder groups, they may function as quasi Fire Safe Councils.

Mower Caused Fires – Unit Wide

Battalion Chief Jim Smith identified a problem with mower caused ignitions within his Battalion. Chief Smith proposed the following program which is applicable Unit wide. Within the last several fire seasons homeowners attempting to meet 4291 clearances have caused multiple fires with mowers. The mower caused fires have been caused by the lack of functioning spark arrestors and the mower blades striking rocks.

In order to address this problem the Battalion has come up with an action plan. The Battalion will ask for assistance from the Prevention Bureau in developing a public education program that will include:

- Press releases
- Roadside signs
- Information flyers to repair and mower shops
- Bi-lingual flyers to be provided to all landscaping companies and companies doing lot clearing work.

The public education program will address the need for the 4291 clearance yet at the same time provide guidelines and information about how to prevent the ignition of fires while creating the hazard clearance.

The Battalion will also create and distribute an informational flyer that can be provided to vendors and repair shops informing them of the requirements of Public Resource Codes 4442, 4442.5 and 4443.

Working with the Fire Prevention Bureau, the Battalion would like to see an increased enforcement response to address the problem such as:

- Focused LE-38 Inspections on equipment
- Citations for mower caused fires
- Cost Collection for mower caused fires

Home Addressing Project – Unit Wide

An ongoing problem with the location and display of home addressing has been identified within the DPA of the Fresno-Kings Unit, the Fresno County Fire Protection District and the Fig Garden Fire Protection District. Several individual Battalions are designing and attempting to implement programs to address this issue. In order to reduce duplication of effort and produce a consistent message, a Unit level project is proposed to address poor or nonexistent home addressing which is a contributing factor to delays in response times. Several possible techniques to address the issue have been identified, they include:

Local station personnel providing presentations to homeowner associations on the importance of proper addressing.

Mailing and/or delivering fliers explaining the importance of posting legible addresses.

Insert fliers into billings from local public utilities districts serving areas.

Enlisting the help from schools, either as a school project or after school activity.

Providing reflective home addresses as a fundraiser for Paid Call Firefighter Companies within Fresno County Fire Protection District and the Fig Garden Fire Protection District.

Ensuring Fresno County Building Inspectors are checking home addressing prior to signing the final on new construction.

Roadside Vegetation Control in Cooperation with Caltrans, Fresno and Kings Counties

Both the California Department of Transportation and county road departments modify vegetation along roads for safety and maintenance reasons. This vegetation modification can act as a Prefire structure such that it prevents ignition or limits fire spread. A project is proposed to establish a closer link with Fresno and Kings counties' road departments as well as Caltrans to determine their priorities for roadside vegetation modification and how they can be integrated into our needs for Prefire management. An anticipated outgrowth of this project would be to establish a closer relationship that could assist all agencies during wildland fire control operations.

Fire Road Land Use Agreements – Unit wide

Previous Prefire Management Plans have identified that some landowner agreements for historically maintained Unit fire roads could not be located. A project is proposed to locate and up date, as needed, landowner agreements for Unit fire roads. As part of this project, Battalion Chiefs would evaluate the need for new fire roads and/or the retirement of existing fire roads.

Beal Fuel Break Maintenance – Battalion 12

The Beal Fuel Break is located in the Pine Ridge area of Fresno County. It follows the Beal Fire Road between Auberry Road and Highway 168. The fuel break is a segment of the historic 650 mile long Ponderosa Way Fuel Break that was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. Today the fuel break is an interagency

structure that is maintained jointly by the Fresno-Kings Unit and the Sierra National Forest. The approximately 500 acres of private land on 88 parcels were last maintained under a VMP contract in 1995. It is in need of maintenance again to maintain its effectiveness.

The Beal Fuel Break is located within the Meadow Lakes Priority Area. It provides protection to the intermix area along Beal Fire Road and the Meadow Lakes and Bald Mountain subdivisions located further up slope. This project helps provide protection to the community of Meadow Lakes, which has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. The fuel break has been successfully used in the past during suppression efforts and will be needed again. It was last utilized in suppressing the Highway Fire of 2000. *For additional information see Appendix C - Interaction Report for The Highway Fire (00FKU008628) and The Beal Fuel Break (Rx 4-FKU-007) August 13-18, 2000.* The Unit's fire history shows at least 25 major fires in the general area of the fuel break since 1917.

In conjunction with maintenance on the fuel break, a focused PRC 4291 inspection program will be utilized in the area. This focused inspection program will emphasize personal contact, education and enforcement by local station personnel. It is believed that this will further heighten the knowledge of area residents not only to fuels reduction, but also to general wildfire safety.

Due to availability and travel time issues for use of Miramonte Conservation Camp crews, alternative methods of treatment and funding are presently being researched for the needed maintenance. During the fall of 2003 the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council took interest in this project and submitted a proposal for Federal grant funding. The proposal wasn't successful but will most likely be resubmitted as additional funding sources are identified.

Meadow Lakes Fuel Break – Battalion 12

This is a new fuel break proposed in the Pine Ridge area of Fresno County. The fuel break would stretch approximately two (2) miles from Auberry Road southeast, down slope of Meadow Lakes subdivision, to Snow Lane in Mile High subdivision. This location is upslope of the Beal Fuel Break and extends further north than the Beal.

The Meadow Lakes Fuel Break would be located within the Meadow Lakes Priority Area. It would provide specific protection to both the Meadow Lakes and Bald Mountain subdivisions from fire approaching from the west. Meadow Lakes has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. This project would provide a much needed secondary line of defense after the Beal Fuel Break. The Unit's fire history shows at least 25 major fires in the general area of the proposed fuel break since 1917.

In conjunction with the construction of this fuel break, a focused PRC 4291 inspection program would be utilized in the area. This focused inspection program would emphasize personal contact, education and enforcement by local station personnel. It is

believed that this would further heighten the knowledge of area residents not only to fuels reduction, but also to general wildfire safety.

Due to availability and travel time issues for use of Miramonte Conservation Camp crews, alternative methods of treatment and funding are presently being researched for this project. This is another project that the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council has interest in. The Unit will pursue planning and developing this project while the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council identifies potential funding sources.

Meadow Lakes North Extension (Sugarloaf) Fuel Break – Battalion 12

This is a new fuel break proposed in the Pine Ridge area of Fresno County. This project would be a logical extension of the proposed Meadow Lakes Fuel Break. The fuel break would stretch approximately 1 ½ miles from Auberry Road north to the Sierra National Forest DPA boundary. This project would be an interagency project with the Sierra National Forest as a large portion of the project area is on National Forest lands.

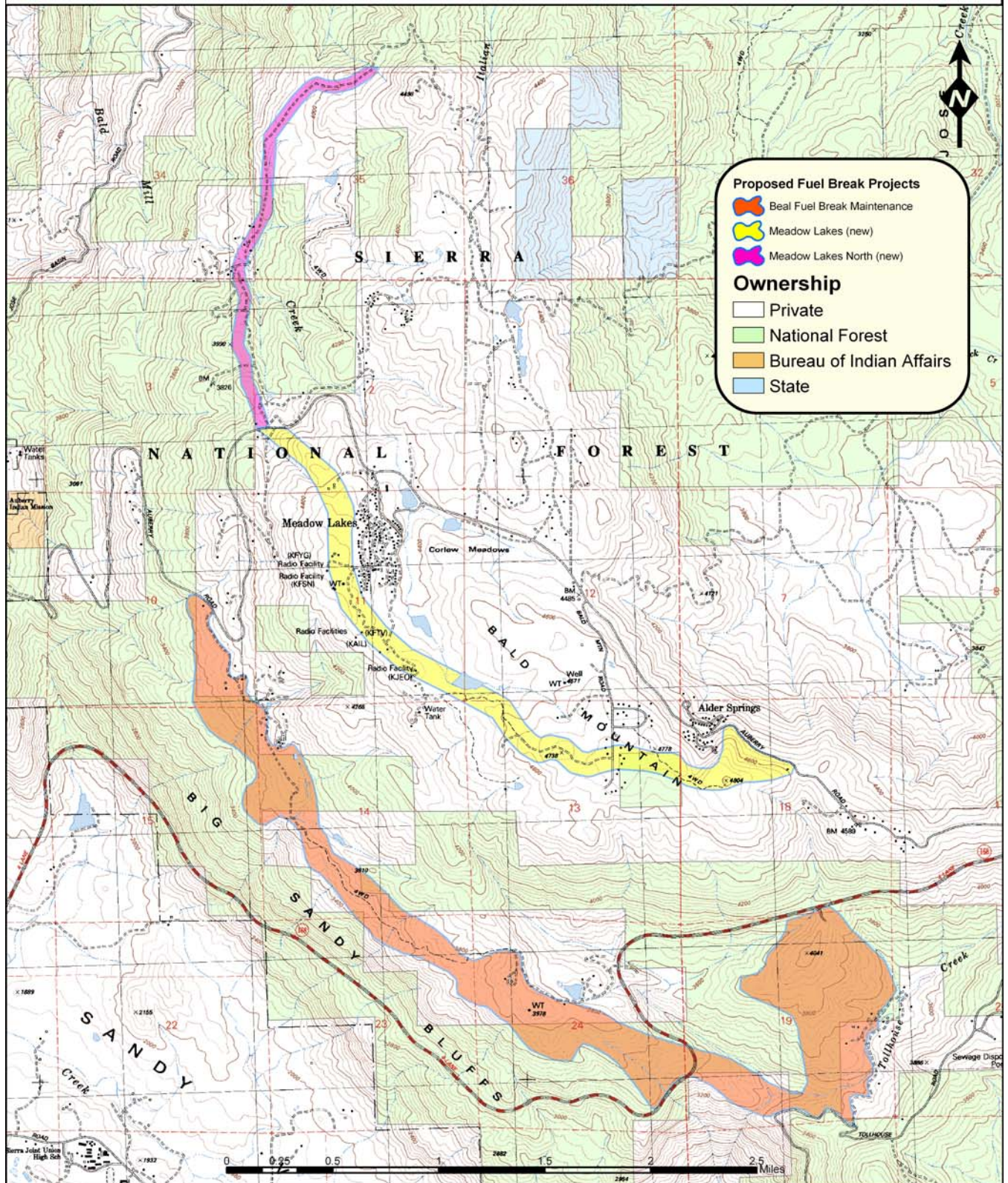
The Meadow Lakes North Extension (Sugarloaf) Fuel Break would be located within the Meadow Lakes Priority Area. It would provide specific protection to intermix homes located along the rim of the San Joaquin River Canyon on Ponderosa Way (Sugarloaf), Sweets Mill and Acorn Way. It would also provide additional protection to the Meadow Lakes and Bald Mountain subdivisions from fire approaching out of the San Joaquin River Canyon. Meadow Lakes has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. Portions of the final control lines for the 1989 Powerhouse Fire are located along the route of this proposed project. In addition, the Unit's fire history shows at least 25 major fires in the general area of the proposed fuel break since 1917.

In conjunction with the construction of this fuel break, a focused PRC 4291 inspection program would be utilized in the area. This focused inspection program would emphasize personal contact, education and enforcement by local station personnel. It is believed that this would further heighten the knowledge of area residents not only to fuels reduction, but also to general wildfire safety.

Due to availability and travel time issues for use of Miramonte Conservation Camp crews, alternative methods of treatment and funding are presently being researched for this project. This is another project that the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council has interest in. The Unit will pursue planning and developing this project while the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council identifies potential funding sources.

Map 7 – Proposed Fuel Break Projects

Proposed Fuel Break Projects



Potential Prefire Projects/Activities

Development Conditioning Project

This would be a Unit wide project, within the SRA. At this time, it would primarily apply to Battalion 4311 and Battalion 4312. The Shaver Lake Basin of Battalion 4312 will be used as an example.

Since the early 1980s, the Shaver Lake Basin has seen and continues to see subdivision development. These developments are all located within the SRA. The County of Fresno has conditioned many of these developments with emergency access and/or fuel modification requirements. These emergency access roads and fuel modification requirements have been required over a space of approximately 20 years and many separate and distinct subdivision tract maps. There is no master document or map that references conditioned fire protection requirements within the Shaver Lake Basin.

The lack of a master fire protection document for the Shaver Lake Basin produces two (2) primary issues. The first is that it is difficult to condition new developments for wildland fire protection issues i.e. access and fuel modifications, because no one has a clear picture of cohesive access or fuel modification goals for the Shaver Lake Basin. The second issue is that many of the conditioned access roads and fuel modification zones have not been constructed and/or are not being maintained. Due to a lack of information on locations and requirements, CDF has insufficient information to inspect these conditioned requirements and to achieve usability of the conditioned structures.

A project is proposed to coordinate with the County of Fresno to better address wildland fire protection issues, as they relate to development conditioning, within the SRA. Historic subdivision conditioning requirements would be identified and consolidated into a master document. A mechanism would be identified to ensure the master document is up-dated as new developments are approved. Existing conditioned requirements would be inspected and deficiencies identified. The responsible party would be required to correct deficient structures.

Existing Vegetation Management Projects

Currently there are no existing traditional Vegetation Management Projects in the Unit. The following project is stand alone project related to vegetation management. While it may have Prefire management benefits, i.e. fuels reduction, it is not an integrated Prefire project.

Noxious Weed Management – Battalion 11

During the summer of 2001, a large landowner in the Millerton area contacted the Fresno-Kings Unit requesting assistance with control of the noxious weed (grass) Medusahead. One of the preferred control methods is late spring burning of the species. Medusahead dries later in the season than other range grasses. After further examination of the landowner's property, it was determined that the infestation had already spread to multiple other landowners including: private individuals, Millerton State Recreation Area, Brighten Crest subdivision. In cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Sierra Resource Conservation District (Sierra RCD), a public meeting was held on September 11, 2001 to discuss the issue and other control methods. As one would expect, turnout that day was very low and a second meeting was held on Feb. 7, 2002. At this time, University of California Cooperative Extension (UC Extension) has undertaken a three (3) year research project evaluating treatment options for the weed (prescribed fire, mechanical treatment and chemical treatment).

The Fresno-Kings Unit is providing assistance to UC Extension during their research project. Over the three year research project, the estimated cost of CDF assistance to UC Extension is \$1,718.25 or \$572.75 per year. At this time additional prescribed burning needs related to individual landowner treatment needs is anticipated to be handled through project burn permit issuance.

Fiscal Framework

The objective of the California Fire Plan is to reduce the total costs and losses from wildfire in California. The idea proposed by the California Fire Plan was to allocate some resources to this objective and fund "additional front-end investments". The resources have been allocated but the CDF funding for the investments has disappeared. Due to the current economic situation of the State, CDF funding probably won't be reappearing for a long time. Fortunately, funding opportunities from the Federal Government have recently been available via grants.

Most of these federal grant funds come with many requirements. CDF also has their own set of requirements and the requirements change over time. Within CDF, the biggest problem with obtaining any type of grant funding for prefire types of projects is the lack of a streamlined process for distributing the funds to the Unit from Sacramento.

The Fresno-Kings Unit is changing the structure of the current fiscal framework in order to streamline the process of obtaining grants and funding projects on the ground in a timely matter. This change involves the use of the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council as the grant administrator instead of CDF. Since the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council has obtained its non-profit status and has hired a coordinator they can now obtain and administer grants to fund prefire types of projects. This has helped eliminate the "red-tape" and

associated delays with administering grants through CDF. The Unit has provided support and “soft” match as a partner with the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council in obtaining the grants. The Unit is using this prefire management plan to help the Council identify priority areas and design prefire projects to address the situation at hand. This creates a win-win situation in which we have the tools to identify projects and design project proposals and the Council has the means of efficiently administering the grant funding for the project. We have created this type of partnership in order to be successful at completing prefire projects and improving the fire protecting in the local communities. The Fresno-Kings Unit is partnering with the Council and has successfully pursued and received grant funding for several prefire projects in the Unit as outlined in the existing prefire projects section of this plan.

Prioritization of Unit Prefire Projects

The prioritization of the Unit level prefire projects will occur at the administrative level. The criteria for prioritizing the projects are:

- The project is within an area that has been identified as a priority area in more than one of the programs (Prefire, Prevention & Vegetation Management). A project that is within an area that has been identified as a priority area in all three programs will have receive a higher prioritization than a project that is only within two program priority areas.
- The project provides at least part of the solution to an identified problem or issue.
- The project is a cooperative project with Sierra National Forest, Sequoia National Forest or any other agency or stakeholder group such as the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council.
- The project funding is budgeted or grant funding is available. Prioritization based on funding has to be flexible and allow the Unit to take advantage of funding as it becomes available.
- The project is achievable.

A review of the Unit level prioritization will occur anytime a new project is proposed or new funding becomes available.